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From left to right: Martin Häusling, MEP & rapporteur for the legislative proposal for a new organic regulation; Jerzy Bogdan Plewa, Director-General of DG AGR; Jan Plagge, President of Bioland and IFOAM EU Board Member; Gustavs Norkārklis, President of the Latvian organic farming association and IFOAM EU Council Member; Phil Hogan, Commissioner of DG AGRI; and Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Director.
Dear readers,

First of all I would like to wish you a belated Happy New Year for 2015 – a year that will be decisive for the organic sector in Europe. By end of the year we will know in detail what the legal framework for organic food and farming will look like in the future.

One of our main accomplishments in 2014 materialised just before Christmas, when the Commission publicly changed its approach towards a new organic regulation and the Council of Agriculture Ministers backed many of the organic sector’s demands.

Following strong opposition to the proposal for a new organic regulation from IFOAM EU, other European stakeholders and the organic sector throughout the EU, the total revision of the regulation is dead. Member States took major sector concerns on board and, at the hearing of European Parliament in December, the European Parliament rapporteur, Martin Häusling, followed the IFOAM EU position by stating: “We don’t want a complete revision of the EU organic regulation, but a reform that will work in practice.”

Even the new agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan has acknowledged that the current proposal is unacceptable. In fact, the European Commission put the organic proposal on the so called “Timmermans list” – all ongoing legislative proposals from the former Commission suggested to be withdrawn. However, the organic proposal remained on the list in the end, but the Commission gave the Parliament and Member States six months to reach reasonable progress.

In practice this means that rejection of the proposal is not a realistic option at the moment, and indeed the Parliament and the Latvian Council Presidency (first half of 2015) have and ambitious timetable to achieve progress in next months.

The position of the organic sector is strong. IFOAM EU is in intensive dialogue with all three EU institutions to find constructive solutions. But before a new regulation would become acceptable, the price in terms of needed changes in the legal text of the proposal is high. The European Parliament is working in line with the IFOAM EU position, and Member States also support major points. At the meeting of EU Agriculture Ministers on 15 December, the ministers endorsed a non-binding report on the first 19 articles summarising the progress made under the Italian EU Council Presidency on the Commission proposal. It is almost entirely in line with IFOAM EU’s position: ten out of eleven guidelines proposed by the Italian Presidency on the first 19 articles and noted by the Council match the organic sector’s demands for improvement. Furthermore, the reintroduction of many elements of the existing organic legislation into the Commission proposal has been suggested.

Despite the positive developments, there is still a long road ahead because, among others, crucial topics such as control, imports and thresholds are still being discussed. We need to stand together as the organic movement and must continue putting pressure on EU and national institutions to secure a stable and implementable legal framework for the future.

I look forward to working with you in 2015 to achieve a political framework that recognises the unique value of organic food and farming. Let me also invite you to join our policy day at BioFach on Wednesday 11 February as well as our 9th European Organic Congress in Riga (10–11 June) to discuss this issue directly with you and policy makers!

Sincerely,

Marco Schlüter
IFOAM EU Director
POLITICAL HOTSPOT

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION SCRAPPED IN EU COMMISSION 2015 WORK PROGRAMME – ORGANIC DOSSIER MAINTAINED

When taking office in November, new Commission President Juncker pledged to prioritize ‘jobs, growth and investment [to] make EU law simpler and to reduce regulatory costs’ and to review pending legislative proposals. The EU’s First Vice-President Frans Timmermans is charged with ‘cutting red tape’ and led the review process in this capacity. Out of 450 pieces of draft legislation 80 were withdrawn, an unprecedented move.

Environmental and other policies important for organic are big losers of the ‘simplification’ process: school food schemes, revision of the seed legislation (the draft proposed by the former Commission was highly controversial), the Clean Air Package and the Circular Economy package are among the drafts withdrawn.

Seed
The Commission justified the withdrawal of the seed legislation by saying: ‘no agreement between the Council and MEPs is foreseeable.’ This does not come as a surprise, as the European Parliament rejected the text last March. The proposal was not satisfactory, but changing the seed legislation is crucial as the current rules cater to conventional and industrial seed production. For seed legislation to be acceptable, adapted rules must be provided for the registration of organic and open pollinated varieties. For example, testing should be carried out under adapted climatic and agronomic conditions, while uniformity and stability must be assessed with adapted criteria. Undue burden must not be placed on small operators. A new proposal revising seed legislation is likely to be issued, but the timing will depend on whether or not a new impact assessment is required. To get involved please contact eric.gall [at] ifoam-eu.org

Clean Air
The Clean Air Package will be incorporated into a ‘modified initiative’ as part of upcoming talks on the 2030 climate and energy package. The Clean Air package included Europe’s air quality plans and relevant requirements obliging farmers to cut emissions from fertilisers, ammonia and methane.

Both the European Parliament and Environment Council are expected to continue to review the proposal in a first reading, but the level of pressure from industrial farming and from some Member States to prevent the adoption of measures to address air quality and climate emissions is worrying. The agricultural sector accounts for 9% of total EU GHG emissions and about 17% of non-ETS emissions. Agriculture is part of the climate change problem, but conversely can also be a significant part of the solution. A new IFOAM EU and FiBL study provides practical ways farmers can reduce nitrogen, ammonia and methane emissions.

CAP School Fruit and Milk schemes
The Commission has also called a halt to its proposals to revise the CAP Fruit and Milk Schemes published in early 2014. These proposals were already making their way through the European Parliament and Agriculture Council, but as part of the CAP simplification process the Commission wants to re-evaluate the schemes and has recommended that both the European Parliament and Agriculture Council put their work “on hold” until this evaluation has been completed.
**Circular Economy**

Importantly, the previous Environment Commissioner’s flagship initiative will be binned. By deciding not to move towards a ‘circular economy’ – for example through initiatives to by reduce food waste – the Commission sends the signal that it shares the opinion of the most retrograde businesses who see environmental stewardship as the enemy of the economic growth. This move is a serious blow to European environmental policy, but also to our economy in the long-term.

**Organic regulation maintained despite discussions**

The organic regulation proposal was included in a draft list of proposals to be withdrawn, because the Commission sensed difficulties in the negotiations within and between the European institutions. However, after the Parliament and the majority of Agriculture Ministers expressed their desire to continue working on the issue while simultaneously making clear that significant changes are needed to produce a regulation that would match the sector’s needs and help it develop, the organic regulation proposal was retained in the final work programme published on 16 December.

Formally, the Commission has said that if there is no agreement about it within six months, the proposal will be withdrawn. The Commission is therefore pushing the Parliament and Council to reach an agreement during the first reading. The Council expressed its will to continue working on the basis of the progress achieved under the Italian Presidency.

These developments, together with Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan’s promise to take a ‘fresh look’ at the organic regulation review, make IFOAM EU more committed than ever to work with the EU institutions to turn the problematic proposal into a tool that will help the sector develop. There is still a long road ahead, especially on fundamental topics such as control, import and thresholds.

**GREEN WEEK BERLIN: COMMISSIONER HOGAN’S FIRST MEETING WITH ORGANIC SECTOR**

New Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan visited the international green week in Berlin this month. IFOAM EU Board Member Jan Plagge and Director Marco Schlüter had the opportunity to meet him for the first time during German Agriculture Minister Schmidt’s reception for foreign VIPs. Commissioner Hogan also spoke at the reception of the German organic umbrella BÖLW, where he underlined his willingness to be open to changes to the Commission’s proposal for a new organic regulation. However, he reconfirmed his intention – contrary to sector demand – to continue with the proposal as he thinks that is more efficient than waiting three years and then starting the process again. BÖLW President Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein, and operators from Belgium, Latvia and France criticized the proposal as dangerous for the organic sector and underlined that we need a different approach.

The IFOAM EU delegation also met the Latvian Vice-Minister for Agriculture Krauze and his delegation. Discussion focussed on how we can work together during the Latvian Presidency and the IFOAM EU position on the Commission’s proposal.
1 NEWS FROM IFOAM EU WORKING FIELDS

1.1 REGULATION

IFOAM EU ACTIVITY ON THE COMMISSION’S REGULATION PROPOSAL

Since the Commission launched the process, IFOAM EU has said that the most effective way to strengthen organic requirements, consumer confidence and market development is to enhance the existing regulation. The changes being discussed in the Council, Parliament and Committee of the Regions go some way towards bringing the Commission proposal back in line with the current regulation. Although we do not believe this is the best approach, IFOAM EU and its members have being involved in active, ongoing discussions with EU, national and regional policy makers and technical teams, and will continue to do so.

In addition to these discussions, IFOAM EU has also prepared positions and technical guidance for the content of the regulation, including:

- **Updated position paper**: The IFOAM EU position paper on the Commission’s proposal for a new Organic Regulation has been updated, in particular regarding import regimes in the organic sector. The organic sector is worried that the Commission’s approach will create a two-tiered system, which would provide trade advantages to developed countries via equivalence deals and, at the same time, disadvantage other imports by requiring strict compliance with EU production rules. All the IFOAM EU recommendations for making the European organic import system fairer and more transparent are available in the updated position paper: Roadmap towards sustainable growth of the EU organic sector.
- **Letter on Organic Viticulture**: The official letter from 19 December 2014 presents the IFOAM EU position on how to deal with the control of downy mildew in organic viticulture.
- **Background information on environmental performance**: Explanation of the IFOAM EU concept for Environmental Performance in Organic Production.

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REVIEW OF ORGANIC REGULATION AMONG LATVIAN EU PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES

Technical discussions on the review of the organic regulation are expected to be among the key priorities for the 6-month agenda of the Latvian EU Presidency which started at the beginning of January. Other priorities include the adoption of Council Conclusions on CAP simplification, further discussions on novel foods and cloning, the next steps regarding the reform of animal & plant health rules as well as official food controls rules, and the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy. The Presidency will set out its priorities for the coming months at the first meeting of the Farm Ministers for 2015 on the Agriculture Council on 26 January.

ITALIAN PRESIDENCY PUBLISHES PROGRESS REPORT

The Italian Presidency presented a progress report on the work done during its term on the Commission proposal for a new organic regulation at a meeting of the Agriculture Council in Brussels. EU Agriculture Ministers endorsed the non-binding report which summarised the progress made under the strong leadership of the Italian Presidency. Nevertheless, a legally binding, partial general approach was rejected as concerns with the Commission’s flawed proposal were too great.

The progress report also aims to orient future Council discussions by giving 11 political guidelines, ten of which match IFOAM EU demands for improvement.

COMMITTEE OF REGIONS REPORT PUBLISHED

On 3–4 December 2014, the plenary of the Committee of Regions adopted an opinion, drafted by rapporteur Mrs Willemien Hester Maij (NL/EPP), on the Commission proposal for a new Organic Regulation.

The opinion suggests the amendments to the proposal, including:

- Modifying the definition of group of operators by removing the Sha criteria and replace it by definitions determined at Member State level
- Reintroducing the possibility to have mixed farms
- Removing article 20, which would establish a decertification threshold
- Making equivalence under trade agreements more transparent

In addition, the opinion criticises the Action Plan proposed by the Commission, finds it disappointing since it doesn’t have any specific objectives or proper budget and the local and regional dimension is missing.

Read the Committee of the Regions’ news article and its opinion text, available in all EU languages.

The Committee of the Regions therefore supported most of IFOAM EU’s recommendations and demonstrated that the regions have listened carefully to organic stakeholders.

NEW IMPLEMENTING RULES ON IMPORT AND ORGANIC AQUACULTURE PUBLISHED


- The deadline for control bodies to apply in order to be recognised for the purpose of compliance has been postponed from 31 October 2014 to 31 October 2015
- Annex III on equivalent Third Countries has been updated
- Annex IV on CBs recognised for the purpose of equivalence has been updated

Find the new Regulation on EUR-Lex or on the IFOAM EU organic regulation page

been included in the new regulation – such as the issue of availability of organic juveniles – will likely be implemented in 2015.

Find the new Regulation on EUR-Lex or on the IFOAM EU organic regulation page. Consult the final EGTOP report on aquaculture (part A and part B).

IFOAM EU MEETING ON AQUACULTURE

On 10 December, the IFOAM EU Organic Aquaculture Expert Group met in order to set the agenda for addressing problems with the provisions in the EU Organic Regulation concerning aquaculture. The group prepared for the work head in 2015 as well as setting long-terms objectives. If you would like to get involved, please send an email to emanuele.busacca [at] ifoam-eu.org.

NEW EGTOP REPORT ON FOOD

The third report on food from the Expert Group for Technical advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) is now available.

In this report, 14 substances and four techniques are evaluated regarding their use in processed organic food products. For example vinegar and gellan gum are considered in line with organic principles while many other substances such as carrageenan, potassium ferrocyanide and chitin-glucan are considered not to be acceptable.

As for techniques, ozone may be used for sterilization of equipment, packaging material, etc., but should not be used in direct contact with organic food. The use of ion exchange and adsorption resins is not considered in line with the objectives, criteria and principles of organic production.

EGTOP reports:
- EGTOP on food (III)
- EGTOP on food (II)
- EGTOP on food (I)

EQUIVALENCY WITH SOUTH KOREA

The long awaited bilateral agreement between the EU and South Korea on organic products has been reached. From 1 February 2015, EU processed organic products - under certain conditions - can be sold as organic in South Korea. As soon as possible, the Commission will amend Annex III of the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 to include South Korea in the list of recognised third countries.
1.2 POLICY

GMOS

DECISION ON GMO CULTIVATION IN THE HANDS OF MEMBER STATES

On 13 January 2015, the European Parliament voted in favour of a directive that provides Member States with new mechanisms to ban GMO cultivation on their territory. This new directive was adopted with 480 votes to 159 and 58 abstentions.

The organic sector welcomes the right of Member States to ban GMO cultivation but believes that the directive will not change the situation in countries unwilling to ban GM crops, since the Council refused to include mandatory measures to prevent contamination and a liability regime.

The organic movement rejects GMOs and, in line with this, EU regulation for organic food and farming does not allow their use. The organic sector faces higher costs due to GM contamination in the fields and throughout the supply chain. As well as the costs for setting up protective measures and testing, among others, organic and non-GM conventional farmers risk losing their organic certification and premium prices when a GM farm contaminates their production. Furthermore this new directive cannot be a substitute for the necessary improvement of the EU risk assessment and authorisation process that is clearly undemocratic.

IFOAM EU will continue, in association with our members and other stakeholders, to advocate Member States ban GMOs, in the context of the “Keeping GMOs out of organics” project. For further information about our advocacy work on biotechnologies and about the project, please contact us: alejandro.gil [at] ifoam-eu.org.

KEEPING GMO OUT OF ORGANICS PROJECT UP AND RUNNING

The organic sector is facing many challenges to keep GMOs out of the supply chain. The IFOAM EU “Keeping GMO out of organics” project aims to assess the current state of prevention from GMO contamination in the sector and to define a practical strategy for operators to stay GMO-free.

The last months of 2014 were dedicated to setting up the main implementation structure of the project, the roundtable, and to defining the concept for a scientific study on the socioeconomic impacts of GMOs.

The first roundtable took place on 11–12 December and was hosted by the Permanent Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the European Union. Fifteen experts on the GM-free supply chain discussed the socioeconomic impact of GMOs in the entire GM-free sector supply chain, the technical challenges linked with the analysis and monitoring of contamination, and the current political framework.

Among the main outcomes of the meeting, experts expressed the need to reinforce the alliance between all GM-free stakeholders and the issue of the availability of GM-free commodities. Some also pointed out the need for a IFOAM EU statement on prevention of contamination.

Regarding the technical aspects of preventing contamination, the experts highlighted the need to assess the feasibility of the database, the aim of which is to...
share information by working together with certifiers and companies. Moreover, on the legal aspects, the principle of liability along the supply chain should be at the core of our advocacy work. The project should also define a common advocacy strategy to ban GMOs, now that the new directive that give new powers to Member States to ban GMOs was approved by the Parliament last 13 of January. This group of experts will keep working together to provide input on a strategic level to the objectives and activities of the “Keeping GMOs out of Organics” project.

Last but not least, together with FiBL, the concept for a scientific study on socioeconomic impact of GMOs on the GMO-free supply chain was developed. It will focus on analysing the impact of GM-production on EU organic farmers and on the European supply chain.

Interested in keeping GMOs out of organics? Find out how you can take part by sending an email to alejandro.gil [at] ifoam-eu.org.

FOOD & FARMING

LIMA CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

An IFOAM delegation travelled to the 20th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC that took place in Lima, on 1–12 December 2014. They highlighted the role sustainable agriculture can play in mitigating climate change and also to draw attention to the consequences of climate change for smallholder farmers.

IFOAM argued that many organic farming practices would help mitigate the effect of agriculture on climate change and, at the same time, help farming systems become more resilient to changing conditions. Such methods can improve the quality of soil, biodiversity and water resources and achieve food security. Agroecology and organic farming are valuable solutions, especially for small farmers, who are usually among the poorest and most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change but produce around 70% of the world’s food.

But the Lima Accord failed to deliver. Binding requirements for countries to cut their emissions were not included. Instead, each nation agrees to enact domestic laws to reduce carbon emissions and put forth a plan in the first half of 2015 stating by how much they will cut emissions after 2020. It also failed to provide binding commitments on adaptation, finance and technology transfer.

According to IFOAM, the parties were too busy concentrating on narrow, industry oriented mitigation and were thus unable to take on a topic as complex as agriculture where adaptation is at least as important as mitigation. Agriculture only gets a mention in the agreement text under finance as a sector where climate objectives need to be integrated.

In the run up to COP21 in Paris next December, IFOAM will continue to highlight the need to promote agroecology as a tool to fight climate change and to get it included in the UNFCCC priorities.

Find out more on the links between agroecology, family farming and climate change mitigation.
IFOAM PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SOILS

2015 is the International Year of Soils. Mandated by the UN, it is an effective way to raise awareness, promote and galvanize international support for the sustainable management of soils, as well as to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Action Plan on the International Year of Soils. It will also help inform the policy debate on sustainable agriculture and development so that soils are duly included in the Post-2015 development agenda.

IFOAM is proud to be part of the IYS. Learn how organic agriculture supports healthy soils.

The launch took place on 5 December 2014, at the UN Headquarters. Concurrent events took place at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy; Bangkok, Thailand; and Santiago, Chile. IFOAM participated in two of these events with IFOAM President André Leu speaking in New York and Board Member Volkert Engelsman in Rome.

CAP

PROGRESS ON CAP IMPLEMENTATION IN MEMBER STATES AND REGIONS MOVES FORWARD

Commission approves first RDPs, further programmes to be adopted first half of 2015
The European Commission approved the first 118 of the EU rural development programmes (RDPs) for the 2015-2020 period at the end of December 2014. This includes RDPs for Poland, Denmark, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Portugal and the German regions of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, as well as the German National Framework Programme – which sets specific elements of common to all German regional RDPs and the German Rural Network. This follows the approval of all Partnership Agreements between the Commission and Member States on the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds in November 2014. The Commission expects that 15 more RDPs will be approved by the end of March 2015. Eligibility for remaining RDPs come under the EU budget criteria for 2015 and therefore will be adopted from mid-2015, after an agreement is reached between the European Parliament and Council on necessary technical revisions to the 2015 budget. These revisions are expected to be adopted before 1 May 2015 and will pave the way for the final approval of the outstanding RDPs.

Majority of Member States opt for the cultivation of legumes to meet greening requirement
Up to 27 Member States have opted to allow farmers to cultivate nitrogen-fixing crops to meeting requirements to maintain 7% of their land under ecological focus areas, as part of the greening component requirements. Under the new direct payments legislation, Member States are not obliged to prohibit the use of synthetic pesticides and fertiliser on these areas. The overview of Member States’ greening plans is included in the information on decisions taken by Member States with regards to new Pillar 1 support instruments, published by the Commission in November 2014. The published information also includes details about the basic payments, voluntary coupled support and transfer of funds between Pillar 1 and 2. The Commission is expected to publish a detailed assessment on new Pillar 1 support in the first quarter of 2015. On a related note, in December 2014, a group of Member States including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Sweden and the UK called on the new Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan to urgently review the all CAP implementing rules in 2016 and undertake a fundamental review of greening in 2017.

Feedback on the new RDP in your country or region needed
IFOAM EU is actively monitoring the CAP implementation process in particular the approval of new RDPs. We are interested to hear from you about the different provisions – accepted or proposed – for organic farming and agro-ecological approaches your country or region in order to develop an overview of support provision under the new RDPs.
ORGANIC FARMER ORGANISATIONS EXCHANGE ON COOPERATIVE APPROACHES IN SPAIN

IFOAM EU farming organisations took part in a meeting on cooperation and capacity building in Villena, Spain on 20 November. The meeting was organised by the Spanish Society for Organic Farming (SEAE) together with IFOAM EU, as part of activities for an EU project Closing Knowledge Gaps and Improving Skills & Competence for Sustainable Farming Enterprises (KSC4Farmers). This project aims to increase farming associations’ understanding of the opportunities available to support cooperative approaches for the development of organic production under the new RDPs. The project also aims to facilitate greater knowledge exchange between farming associations.

At the meeting participants took the opportunity to exchange on the current state of play regarding the implementation of new Rural Development Programmes and further discuss best practice approaches. A key part of the meeting involved an organised visit to a number of organic farms and enterprises involved in cooperative activities – including an organic vineyard, fruit orchards, and olive groves linked to a small processing plant where participants saw the approach in action.

The project meeting took place in the frame of the IFOAM EU Farmers Interest Group with participation from both project partners and other farming experts. A final outcome of the project will be the production of a training manual for agricultural advisors, outlining opportunities for cooperation between farmers, farming associations and other stakeholders in new RDPs. The manual is expected to be completed in summer 2015.

KSC4farmers is a 2-year Leonardo da Vinci Partnership Project which is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.
1.3 EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION POLICY/TP ORGANICS

TP ORGANICS LAUNCHES STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENDA AT BIOFACH SCIENCE DAY

The top research and innovation priorities of the European organic sector until 2020 are described in TP Organics’ new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which will be launched at the BioFach Science Day – a joint TP Organics and TIPI event – on 13 February. The new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda will be used to influence funding priorities of EU and national research programmes, in order to solve current challenges and further drive the development of the sector and strengthen its competitiveness.

After the launch, TP Organics will hold a session for SMEs active in the organic food industry about funding opportunities for innovation and business-research cooperation available in EU research programmes.

In the afternoon, the Science day will be dedicated to the international aspects of organic food and farming research and is organised by TIPI, the IFOAM Global Technology Innovation Platform.

Science day programme and registration

EIP-AGRI UPDATE

Reducing antibiotics in pig farming

Building on the work of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on pig production, the EIP-AGRI service point has published a brochure on "Reducing antibiotics in pig farming." The new publication gives an overview of new research initiatives, existing good practices and key areas for future research in the field of pig health and welfare, specific alternatives to antibiotics and change of attitudes of farmers, veterinarians and advisors. The brochure recognises the need to learn from success stories in organic farming on how to keep levels of antibiotic use low, and is based on the final report of the Focus Group.

Read the brochure and the full report.

Suppressing soil-borne diseases in vegetables and arable crops

On 2–3 December, the first meeting of the Focus Group on Integrated Pest Management of Soil-Borne Diseases took place. The Focus Group brings together twenty farmers, advisors and researchers to:

• Identify the main soil borne diseases in the EU and the key causes for outbreaks
• Compare different IPM techniques to suppress soil-borne diseases
• Explore breeding strategies for cultivars that are more resistant to soil-borne diseases
• Identify alternatives to soil fumigation that are ready to be applied or will be in the short term
• Gather farm management practices that reduce the pressure of soil-borne diseases.
• Determine which factors would limit the application of the identified techniques and make proposals for addressing them

The scope of possible alternative techniques to be investigated by the Focus Group is wide and includes chemical disease control. IFOAM EU calls on the Focus Group members to focus their work on agroecological farm management practices that enhance the soil’s own capacity to suppress diseases, e.g. by applying organic fertilisers that support the soil’s microbial community. The report of the Focus Group is expected in the second half of 2015.
TP Organics’ online consultation on the priorities for Horizon 2020 attracted more than 300 responses. The top priorities were included as input for the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016/2017. All responses have been integrated in the new TP Organics’ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda.

Together, the proposed topics are developed and supported, for example through projects, they could support the sustainable growth of the organic sector in Europe and beyond in terms of both technical and market development, as well as contribute to the implementation of achievement of the EU Organic Action Plan goals.

Key topics include:
- Alternatives to certain inputs used in organic agriculture
- Availability of organic seeds – towards 100% organic seed
- Eco-efficient production of animal feed at local level
- Organic food processing concepts and technologies
- Public health effects of organic food systems in Europe
- Innovative ICT tools for organic cropping systems
- Internet-of-Things based solutions for resource-efficient primary production
- Developing the organic farming policies of the future
- Improving organic certification
- Better market and benchmarking data
- Improving food security and rural development in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

### Priority topics for Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016/2017

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**Science Day**

13 February 2015 – Nuremberg, Germany

Registration required before 6 February

- 09:00–09:30 Opening
- 09:30–11:00 New Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the European organic sector
- 10:30–11:00 Discussion
- 11:00–11:30 Break
- 11:30–12:30 Financing business-research cooperation for innovation in the organic sector
- 12:30–13:30 Lunch
- 13:30–14:00 Presentation of the 2nd draft of the TIPI Vision and Strategy for Organic Farming Research
- 14:00–15:00 Stakeholders’ comments on the TIPI Vision and Strategy for Organic Farming Research
- 15:00–15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30–17:00 Workshop on the TIPI Global Vision and Strategy for Organic Farming Research, TIPI
- 17:00 A global organic research vision and strategy: Summary and conclusion, TIPI

Science Day at BioFach is jointly organised by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the European Union Group of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM EU).

More information about Science Day 2015
2 IFOAM EU DEVELOPMENTS

SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR COLLEAGUES…

Lena
Lena Wietheger was the second employee in the IFOAM EU office in Brussels. Starting in 2004, she was a pillar of IFOAM EU for 9 years, and all were impressed by her great dedication and commitment to the organic sector. Within IFOAM EU she grew and left her mark on an important number of roles – from project coordinator to chief coordinator climate change, from being deputy head of office to head of communications – many of which she was the first to perform and set the bar high. Fortunately, she will remain in the sector and will continue fighting for organic farmers’ rights as continuation of her work here. We congratulate her on being appointed to work for German Green MEP, Martin Häusling and wish her all the best in her professional development and look forward to collaborating for a long time still.

Antje
In December, we bid farewell to our colleague Antje Kölling who headed IFOAM EU’s policy unit since mid-2009. Antje helped to build the group’s policy work first as a coordinator and then as the unit manager. Having been a research assistant at German universities, a journalist at the German small farmers association Abl and a policy advisor for the German MEP F. W. Graefe zu Baringdorf, she was well placed to engage stakeholders, and build relationships with key civil society groups and policymakers. She played an important role in the formulation and agreement of key policy positions, the building and profiling of the organic sector’s contribution to EU environmental and climate policy as well as seed and plant breeding legislation and GMO-free farming polices. We wish her the very best in her new role as a public relations and policy manager with Demeter and look forward to working with her well into the future.

Ivan
Ivan Marko Stazić joined IFOAM EU as a European volunteer in 2013. As a journalist with no prior background in organic agriculture, he quickly learned about the sector and greatly contributed to the work of IFOAM EU. Not only did he enthusiastically assist in communication about it, he also played an important part in many IT-related projects including the setup of the new website, the new content management system and new office solution, not to mention always helping out colleagues at the office with their IT. We will miss Ivan’s optimism, professionalism and good spirits and wish him all the best in his future career!
3 EVENTS

3.1 PREVIEW OF EVENTS

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE: IFOAM EU CONFERENCES

11–14 February 2015 – Nuremberg, Germany

Take part in discussions and give input on key topics such as the EU organic regulation review, opportunities under the new CAP, the future of the EU organic controls system, the potential of the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture to support organic and more. Express your opinion and learn more about organic food and farming in the European Union!

Visit us in Hall 1, stand 11–14 (1–447)!

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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, 11 February</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:00–18:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room St. Petersburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU Policy day: Commission proposal for a new organic regulation organized by IFOAM EU in cooperation with BIOFACH</td>
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<td>Registration required before 8 February</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thursday, 12 February</th>
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<tr>
<td>14:00–15:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Oslo</td>
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<td>Controls in organic farming – from a process based system to an end-product approach?</td>
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<td>TP Organics – “Roadmap to Make Europe More Organic” – The role of stakeholders in implementing the European Organic Action Plan</td>
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<td>17:00–17:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Prague</td>
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<td>TP Organics – “Roadmap to Make Europe More Organic” – The role of stakeholders in implementing the European Organic Action Plan</td>
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<th>Friday, 13 February</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00–11:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Istanbul</td>
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<td>Import regime – Compliance versus Equivalence</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00–11:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Oslo</td>
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<tr>
<td>TP Organics Science day</td>
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<td>13:00–14:00</td>
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<td>Room Mailand</td>
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<td>SUSTAINING workshop</td>
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<td>14:00–14:45</td>
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<td>Room Istanbul</td>
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<td>New challenges for organic processors and traders</td>
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<td>15:00–15:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Istanbul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key opportunities for organics using rural development policy</td>
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<td>15:00–15:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room Copenhagen</td>
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<td>How to keep GMOs out of the supply chain</td>
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More information on our website.
GOOD FOOD, GOOD FARMING

10–11 February 2015 – Brussels, Belgium

Renewing civil society’s agenda towards sustainable food and agriculture

**Why?**
This 1.5-day event brings together representatives from civil society, grassroots groups, researchers, national/regional authorities, policymakers and more to:

1. Assess the implementation of the reformed CAP 2014–2020, prospects of agricultural sustainability and of rural renaissance.
2. Identify milestones to support transition of food and agriculture systems based on agroecological approaches.

**Who?**
The Agricultural and Rural Convention 2020 (ARC2020), Friends of the Earth Europe and IFOAM EU are happy to invite you to a civil society gathering and conference on February 10-11 2015 in Brussels, hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

**Where?**
The building of the European Economic and Social Committee (Van Maerlant Building), 2 Rue Van Maerlant, Brussels.

Registration and more information, including draft programme.

ORGANIC BIOMAS: GENERATING GREEN ENERGY IN OUR REGIONS

11 March 2015 – Brussels, Belgium

The SUSTAINGAS project, which focuses on sustainable biogas production on organic farms, has almost come to an end. Therefore, the final event ‘Organic biogas: generating green energy in our regions’ will take place on Wednesday, 11 March 2015, from 10 am to 1 pm, in the Committee of the Regions. The panel will include speakers with diverse expertise in biogas production ranging from policy to farming, and research. The aim of the event is to present the benefits of organic biogas production, discuss and raise awareness on the project results and also, to show the opportunities and barriers on regional and EU levels.

Register for the event

For more information, please contact Effimia Chatzinikolaou Effimia.chatzinikolaou [ at ] ifoam-eu.org or visit www.sustaingas.eu
3.2 REVIEW OF EVENTS

REPORT FROM THE 3RD ORGANIC PROCESSING CONFERENCE NOW ONLINE

The 3rd Organic Processing Conference report reflects the discussions and conclusions from the sessions on integrity, quality and sustainability.

On 17–18 November 2014, 125 organic processing experts from companies, organisations, control bodies and public institutions, representing 14 European countries, met in Paris to discuss the further development of the organic food sector, as well as technical and regulatory challenges processors face in their daily work. The Commission proposal for a new European Organic Regulation also offered many opportunities for debate.

This is a report of the discussions and conclusions as expressed by the participants. The points of view and opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the IFOAM EU position.

BIO BEURS: THE DUTCH ORGANIC TRADE FAIR

On 21 and 22 January, Bio Beurs featured over 200 exhibitors as well as the latest trends, products and research, not to mention the important developments on regulation. Committee of the Regions Rapporteur Hester Maij, IFOAM EU Director Marco Schlüter and Bionext Director Bavo van den Idsert discussed the recent developments and what will happen next with regard to the Commission’s proposal for a new organic regulation. All panelists agreed on the need for major changes to the Commission’s original proposal and the importance for the organic sector to develop.

More than nine thousand visitors attended the Bio Beurs in the IJsselhallen in Zwolle, from agriculture, retail, hospitality, government and research institutions. As well, with over 200 exhibitors is the first edition of the Bio-fair was fully booked.
4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM EU

IFOAM EU KEY SPONSORS 2015

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM EU to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

WORKING IN THE ORGANIC SECTOR? COMMITTED TO MAKE EUROPE MORE ORGANIC?

DONATE NOW!

Protect your interests and help us make Europe more organic by:
• Ensuring that EU regulations match the reality of organic producers
• Ensuring that EU and national legislation do not discriminate against organic and traditional seed production
• Fighting the expansion of GMO use in Europe and protecting organic farmers and producers from contamination

You can help MAKE EUROPE MORE ORGANIC

Join our current partners and make your donation!
5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10–11 February  Good food, good farming  Brussels, Belgium

11–14 February  BioFach 2015  Nuremberg, Germany

24 February  Air breakfast meeting  Brussels, Belgium

11 March  Organic biogas: generating green energy in our regions  Brussels, Belgium

11–12 June  9th European Organic Congress  Riga, Latvia

IFOAM ORGANIC LEADERSHIP COURSE (OLC) EUROPE 2015
First residential session: 12–19 July 2015 in the Netherlands
Second residential session: February 2016 in Germany

Don’t miss this unique opportunity to develop your skills, knowledge and leadership attitude. The IFOAM OLC brings international expertise and vision to a course that will help you attain your personal development goals. Applications are currently being accepted. The deadline is 15 April, so follow the instructions on the OLC Europe page and apply!

Find out more about the leadership course.